



The official newsletter of the

Douglas County Cemetery Association

WINTER 2019

President's Message

After the board meeting...

By John Loken, DCCA President

It seems appropriate to provide membership with a mid-year update on their organization. Your board has been meeting regularly in an effort to meet the stated mission: to fulfill its purpose of being a resource for member cemeteries in dealing with the operational problems that arise.

For a few of the past years, your board put most of its energy into an essay contest for county 5th graders. It was not widely embraced by schools and fell short of getting students out into cemeteries to research stories of individuals buried there and becoming involved themselves in discovering a bit of the history. In addition to that, funding support for the contest had all but disappeared. So the decision for 2019 was to discontinue the essay contest and re-focus DCCA to serving local cemetery boards, to find ways to add value, ways to support local boards as they deal with challenges. And frankly, we are having great difficulty spelling out what those services or support measures might be.

As a board member of DCCA, the experiences I bring to the table are limited to my experience as a local cemetery board member. "My" cemetery is one that adjoined a church until the early 1960s when the church closed. Burials are few, contacts with descendants of former families are fading away and care and management of the cemetery falls to a few who are aging out. Our cemetery's challenges are to solicit sufficient donations to cover the cost of maintenance and succession and determine who will take over care and management from the current board. Neither of these challenges are readily solved through the efforts of DCCA.

What are your challenges and issues? From your experience, what opportunities does the DCCA board have to serve local boards? Do you utilize the website? Do you find value in the newsletters or the annual meeting? Are you willing to serve on the DCCA board?

Your feedback at this time is extremely important to us. Unless some new initiatives are uncovered that are within the capability of DCCA to deliver and that serve local boards, the DCCA Board will likely recommend to members at the next annual meeting that the organization be dissolved. If value is found in an annual gathering for local cemetery boards to meet and discuss issues in common, invite speakers, etc, this could be arranged by a volunteer group without an umbrella organization or dues. We need to hear from you. Please email dccamn@gmail.com or call me at 320-834-2947.

How to raise money for your cemetery

Raising funds for cemetery maintenance is a major issue across the nation. Cemetery boards need to be creative to find new ways to fund this important need. Here are a few ideas:

Form a nonprofit. If you aren't already a nonprofit, consider forming a "Friends" committee to which tax-deductible contributions may be made.

Market your need. Establish a website, distribute fliers, send letters explaining the need to descendants of those buried at the cemetery as well as residents and businesses in the community.

Host a fundraising event. Host a carnival or "Day at the Cemetery" that is family friendly with games, food, face painting, etc. Or try an educational lunch or dinner with a history presentation and tour. Or attract a target audience with a garden party featuring tea or champagne and treats, a silent auction raffle and painting or crafts. Make it an annual event that has the potential to grow each year.

Adopt-A-Plot. Ask community members to "adopt" someone interred who has no known descendants. Charge an annual fee for upkeep of that plot.

Whatever you do, don't just solicit donations or attendance from those already involved or descendants of those interred. Make it a community-wide effort!

DOUGLAS COUNTY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

C/O Douglas County Historical Society

1219 Nokomis Street, Alexandria, MN 56308

PHONE: 320-762-0382 EMAIL: dccamn@gmail.com

www.dccamn.com

A cemetery's entrance serves as a welcome

Kensington cemetery completes new sign project this summer

By Julie Smith,
DCCA Board Member

As is the case with many old cemeteries, entrance signs, pillars, arches, etc. fall victim to the elements.

The old brick columns at the entrance of the First Lutheran Cemetery in Solem Township near Kensington had deteriorated to the point where something needed to be done. In addition, one of them was tilting due to the shallow footing.

Cemetery officials consulted with an experienced bricklayer to see if they could be saved with some tuck pointing and repair, but the opinion was that they

were beyond repair.

A landscaping company was then hired to build new stacked block columns on new footings. They were able to remove the old granite sign listing the cemetery name and start date and incorporate it into the new design.

Ralph Gunderson of Kensington (former DCCA board member) has many family members at the cemetery, including his wife Georgene, so he decided to donate the money to rebuild the columns.

The cost was \$3,200, which included removing the old columns and their footings, salvaging the exist-



The new sign at First Lutheran Cemetery in Solem Township.

ing granite sign and building new footings and stacked stone columns while incorporating the old granite sign into one of the columns.

The project was done in about two weeks and has

been given many compliments.

A sign will be added in the future paying tribute to Ralph Gunderson's donation in memory of his wife and parents.

DCCA member cemeteries *as of October 15, 2019*

- Bohemian Independent Cemetery - Lake Mary Township
- Brandon Cemetery - Brandon Township
- Calvary Catholic Cemetery - Osakis Township
- Carlos Prairie Cemetery - Carlos Township
- Christian Union Cemetery - Holmes City Township
- Christina Lake Lutheran Church Cemetery - Lund Township
- Ebenezer Cemetery - Leaf Valley Township
- East Moe Lutheran Church Cemetery - Moe Twp.
- English Grove Cemetery - Orange Township
- Evergreen Cemetery - La Grand Township
- Fahlun Lutheran Church Cemetery - Osakis Township
- Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church Cemetery - Moe Township
- First Lutheran Church Cemetery - Solem Township
- Hudson Cemetery - Hudson Township
- Kinthead Cemetery/Sunset Memorial - La Grand Township
- Lake Charley Cemetery - Ida Township
- Lake Ida Cemetery - Ida Township
- Lake Mary Cemetery - Lake Mary Township
- Moe Heights Cemetery - Moe Township
- Mound Grove Cemetery - Evansville Township
- Nelson Cemetery - Osakis Township
- Oscar Lake Lutheran Church Cemetery - Holmes City Twp.
- Our Lady of Seven Dolors - Millerville Township
- Rose City Evangelical Free Cemetery - Spruce Hill Twp.
- Rose Hill Trinity Cemetery - Holmes City Township
- St. Ann's Catholic Church Cemetery - Brandon Township

- St. John's Cemetery - Ida Township
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cemetery - Miltona Township
- St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery - Moe Township
- St. Petri Lutheran Church Cemetery - Urness Township
- Solem Cemetery - Solem Township
- Trinity Lutheran Church Cemetery/Zunker - Carlos Twp.
- Trysil Bethesda Lutheran Cemetery - Holmes City Twp.
- Van Loon Cemetery - Holmes City Township
- Wennessborg Cemetery - Solem Township
- West Moe Church Cemetery - Moe Township
- Zionsborg Cemetery - Evansville Township

TODD COUNTY CEMETERIES:

- Gordon Pleasant Hill Cemetery - Gordon Township
- Sauk Valley Lutheran Cemetery - West Union Township

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

- Anderson Funeral & Cremation Services
- Lind Funeral Home and Cremation Services

Dues are \$30 per calendar year and must be paid prior to the annual meeting if your cemetery wishes to have voting privileges. Contact Renae Hills at 320-760-0693 or hills.renae@gmail.com for information.

Posting cemetery information offers some protection

While it may seem like a wasted effort, it is a good idea to have signage at your cemetery that outlines cemetery rules and policies, as well as the hours your cemetery is “open” to the public.

Many cemeteries simply post their hours as “Sunrise to Sunset.”

The question often asked is: “If you don’t have a locked gate to ‘close’ your cemetery, or a person who is there to enforce the rules or hours, what good does it do to post this information?”

Whether your cemetery is considered public or private, whether it has fences or not, in most jurisdictions, if a sign is posted with hours, it is considered trespassing if someone is there outside of the posted hours.

This comes in handy if there is ever anything stolen or vandalized.

Law enforcement does patrol these areas. If hours and rules are posted, it makes it easier for them to enforce the rules or to prosecute any violations within the cemetery.



Cemetery signs can display as little or as much information as a cemetery board wishes. Here are three local examples. (Above) The Van Loon Cemetery sign explains rules regarding decorations, plantings, green burials and more. Kinkead Cemetery’s sign (upper right) adds information about benches, swings and more, while Hudson Cemetery’s sign (lower right) is more basic.



Historical Society requests up-to-date copies of all cemetery plat maps and burial information

When visitors, researchers and family members are searching for the burial place of loved ones, they typically contact local historical societies.

The Douglas County Historical Society (DCHS) in Alexandria fields many of these inquiries each year

The DCHS maintains cemetery records and plat maps and has a database of all Douglas County burials searchable by cemetery or by a person’s last name.

This is an incredible resource, but in order for it to be accurate and up-to-date, the individual cemeteries must help!

Through the years, many cemeteries have added new plats making the maps currently on file at DCHS outdated. All cemeteries are asked to get up-to-date maps submitted as soon as possible.

All cemeteries within Douglas County are also reminded to send burial information to DCHS at the time of each burial so that the records can remain up-to-date.

To assist the staff and volunteers in providing accurate and helpful information to those inquiring, please drop off or mail copies of your up-to-date plat maps to:

Douglas County Historical Society
1219 Nokomis Street
Alexandria, MN 56308

Burial information may also be emailed to the society at historic@dchsmn.org. For more information, call 320-762-0382

2019-2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Loken
PRESIDENT

Trysil Bethesda Lutheran Cemetery
320-834-2947
jcloken59@gmail.com
Elected: 2018 (1st term)
Board eligibility expires: 2024

Darrel Holverson,
VICE PRESIDENT

St. Petri Cemetery
320-766-9977
holvco@hotmail.com
Elected: 2017 (1st term)
Board eligibility expires: 2023

Tara Bitzan
SECRETARY

Non Cemetery Member
320-815-3184
tbitzan10@gctel.net
Elected: 2017 (1st term)
Board eligibility expires: 2023

Rena Hills
TREASURER

Lake Mary Cemetery
320-760-0693
hills.renae@gmail.com
Elected: 2018 (1st term)
Board eligibility expires: 2024

Jerry Buse

East Moe Cemetery
320-219-3929
jerbuse@wisper-wireless.com
Elected: 2017 (1st term)
Board eligibility expires: 2023

Gary Halstead

Hudson Cemetery
605-321-3516
halsteadmn@gmail.com
Elected: 2019 (1st term)
Board eligibility expires: 2025

Julie Smith

First Lutheran Cemetery, Kensington
PO Box 116
Kensington, MN 56343
Cell: 320-815-3498
Email: mn_petite@yahoo.com
Elected: 2019 (1st term)
Board eligibility expires: 2025

Douglas County Historical Society

Ex-officio
320-762-0382
historic@dchsmn.org
Non-expiring

Q & A:

Is embalming required in MN?

When a body is embalmed, blood is removed and replaced with fluids that delay disintegration. Refrigeration serves the same purpose.

Minnesota requires that a body be embalmed or packed in dry ice if it will be shipped by public transportation, burial or cremation will not occur within 72 hours after death, the body is infected with a communicable disease, or the body will be viewed publicly (by people other than family).

A body may not be kept in refrigeration for more than six days or packed in dry ice for more than four days from the time the body is released from place of death or from a medical examiner.

Contribute to
the newsletter!

If you have information, tips, advice, or other items you would like to see included in a future newsletter, or if you would like to spotlight your cemetery, email information and photos to dccamn@gmail.com.

Help us save money!

We encourage all who receive this newsletter to sign up for the electronic version to save money on printing, envelopes and postage. If you are willing to move to an electronic newsletter, email dccamn@gmail.com.

The next meeting of the DCCA board of directors is tentatively set for **Thursday, January 16 at 6 pm** at the Garfield City Hall.

If you have anything you would like the board to address, please contact any board member prior to that date!

OUR MISSION:

The Douglas County Cemetery Association will work hard to fulfill its purpose of being a resource for member cemeteries in dealing with the operational problems that arise, creating mutually beneficial relationships between our members, promoting our cemeteries as the guardians of our county's heritage and as a place of lasting tribute to the memory of those who have gone before us.